

# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

Held on Thursday, January 13, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Williams called the Riverside, Ohio City Council Work Session to order at 6:01 p.m. at the Riverside Administrative Offices located at 5200 Springfield Street, Suite 100, Riverside, Ohio, 45431.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Williams led the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Council attendance was as follows: Deputy Mayor Denning, present; Mrs. Franklin, present; Ms. Fry, present; Mr. Joseph, present; Ms. Lommatzsch, present; Jesse Maxfield, absent; and Mayor Williams, present.

Staff present was as follows: Joshua Rauch, City Manager; Chris Lohr, Assistant City Manager; Kathy Bartlett, Public Service Director; Gary Burkholder, Community Development Director, Tom Garrett, Finance Director, Dan Stitzel, Fire Chief; and Katie Lewallen, Clerk of Council.

**EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS:** Ms. Lommatzsch motioned to excuse Mr. Maxfield. Deputy Mayor Denning seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

**ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA:** No changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Deputy Mayor Denning motioned to approve the agenda. Mrs. Franklin seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

## **WORK SESSION ITEMS:**

### **I) Housekeeping Updates**

Mr. Rauch discussed the Airway crosswalk that was tabled at the last council meeting. He stated there is not a lot of data regarding accident rates at that particular crosswalk. Chief Robinson asked Huber to run data on that, but the challenge is there is no address for the location. Data for incidents at an intersection or landmark is not recorded accurately for the actual location; it could be further down the road so he cannot provide any firm data on whether or not they've had a lot of incidents at that crosswalk. He stated they may need to have an approach and think about a design standard to use across the board for these crossing areas. (Note...sound was not working for about two minutes).

Ms. Lommatzsch stated she supports doing a standard. She asked if anyone tried to get statistics from MVRPC. Mr. Rauch stated he did not, but would follow up to see if they have detail at that level for the crosswalk. Mrs. Franklin stated they need to have something uniform, especially for crosswalks not controlled by a light. It would be nice to have a standard rather than decide for each one individually. Mr. Rauch stated he will contact Five Rivers to see if there is any data, and unless they see something that has an imminent need for action, they can leave the table and move on to design standards. Mrs. Franklin asked if they were moving forward with the one on Valley, where the light is being removed. Ms. Bartlett indicated that the project was taken out of the budget. The pedestrian traffic does not warrant the flashing crosswalk, but they will continue to monitor. Mr. Rauch stated that if they see traffic start to spike in that area and they need to address the crosswalk; they will apply the standard in that event as well.

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Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

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Mr. Rauch stated that the treasury came out with final guidance on ARPA funds. They are letting any community who received a grant allocate \$10 million of revenue loss regardless of whether they had it or not. They can spend the money how they want within the confines of revenue loss according to that program with minimal strings attached. He added that the bulk of the money for this year has been earmarked. They will get a second transfer of money in September of this year for approximately \$1.3 million. They have thoughts on how to use portions of that, but he wants to be deliberate. It is a lot of money; but at the same time, it isn't. He intends to work with department heads on a plan and they will try to narrow down the top three things they should spend the money on and do an internal prioritization exercise among department heads. He will then come to council with solid recommendations for near, immediate, and long term. They are not under the gun to obligate the money until 2024 and can spend it until 2026. He would rather try not to use money to offset an ongoing cost. It is a grant, and it is not best practice to use for something that goes one year after year.

## II) Communication Preferences

Mr. Rauch stated when he started he sent a weekend update to council and department heads to recap the highlights and things that need to be on council's radar. He is aware of the PAR that had varied detailed. He stated the weekend update is similar with less statistics and granular detail. He wanted to know if they would like to continue with the weekly or continue the PAR or move away from the PAR and put the weekend updates in the packet to avoid duplication from staff. Ms. Fry stated she liked the weekend update over the PAR and the level of detail is easier to digest. Mrs. Franklin agreed; the weekend update has substance. Deputy Mayor Denning stated the weekend update has more useful information. Ms. Fry stated when getting verbal updates with all of the projects going on, it can be hard to follow all of the projects. If in addition or as part of the weekly update, somehow highlight things in motion so when the project is referenced there is a cross-reference to it. Council discussed having a project tracker. Mr. Rauch stated they could put in the weekend update in lieu of the PAR and distinguish more about how the ball is moving forward on different projects. He wants to avoid redundancy between what is being written and what is being said. Ms. Fry stated she wants to be well versed in the vocabulary in what staff is using everyday so she can have a reference that would be helpful to her. He stated they can be more deliberate on what they are calling things and how they are connecting the dots so it is not confusing. Mr. Joseph reviewed the information they are provided and when. Mr. Rauch stated that the packet really is intended to give all the information they need as a council to make decisions at a business meeting. It is all the information they need to be effective at a meeting. The weekend update includes the highlights of what staff is doing and things coming up so they can all be on the same page. Packets try to go out on Friday, but sometimes it is on Mondays. He reiterated that he would removed the PAR, replace with the weekend update and provide information to connect the dots on what is happening in the city. Mayor Williams asked that a project tracker of sorts that gets updated monthly be included as well. Discussion was held on what the project tracker would look like and include. Ms. Lommatzsch stated they need to have anything that is a major financial impact to the city on the tracker. Mr. Rauch stated he will try to make anything high-priority and high-financial condensed and informative to explain what it is, what was done last, and expected movement.



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Mr. Rauch stated that there are a few spots available on the Budget Committee. They are working on a more affordable, reader-friendly budget document that a person can dive into and it explains how the budget works and where do revenues come from. He has reviewed other cities documents, and he wants to build a framework of that document this year and develop it out in the future. He wants to include a statistical section or performance indicator section, similar to things that used to be in the PAR. He asked council if they would like this included in the budget or a separate document that digs more into performance and activities. Ms. Fry stated that information is useful when setting priorities. Mr. Joseph stated what he sees often is current year data, prior year data, adherence to budget for prior year, adherence to budget for current year, and then a blank line that can be filled out and annotate. It may work well for department heads; such as a budget worksheet. Mr. Rauch stated he intends to get them to a place close to that. He stated that when statistics are put into the budget it is more for a general audience intended to give an idea of what the departments are up to. Those numbers aren't always part of the decision-making process. They will probably do a little bit of both. Putting statistics in the budget will provide them with a tool to help them to make budget decisions. To him, that is more of an annual report so they have a full 12 months to look back at what has happened in the past year.

Mr. Rauch stated that the does not find the agenda item cover sheets useful. It is limited in that it doesn't give a councilmember who is not at a meeting to anticipate or have the context of what is being talked about or action being taken before they get to the meat in the packet. He has designed with the city clerk a draft of a cover sheet to use with agenda items going forward. Any time there is a piece of legislation, staff would fill this out and give them an idea of what they are reviewing, staff recommendation for the item, and the finance element. This will go in front of all the legislation. There may not be a lot of fiscal impact for many, but the idea is to make the packet more useful for council members, particularly if one cannot make the meeting. He asked if this would be helpful or if they would like to keep the current format. Council discussed the options and most felt the new document would be more beneficial. Deputy Mayor Denning asked if it will include information should additional money beyond what was budgeted be needed for a piece of legislation. Mr. Rauch made a note of the request. Mr. Joseph commented that on somethings he sees often that boards like theirs use is how far are they along and how much is left for a particular items. This helps should an adjustment of funds need to be made. Mr. Rauch stated it is difficult to do now, but he is optimistic once they get a new system for them to be able to do.

Mr. Rauch stated in the council handbook is a policy preference for electronic delivery for packets. Assuming the council handbook passes, and all council has been provided an electronic device, they can request a paper copy that staff will print, but put it in their mailbox for pickup. They will do this for council, boards, and commissions so that everyone is on the same page for consistency. His recommendation is to go completely electronic should the handbook be approved. Discussion was held on electronic copies being delivered. Deputy Mayor Denning stated that the boards and commissions weren't issued Surface Pros; it may be somewhat of an issue. He stated that some maps are large that even electronic may not be sufficient. He would like to see those printed. Mrs. Franklin stated it is more a delivery issue; they don't live in a city that is so large they couldn't come by and pick up a copy. Mr. Rauch

# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

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stated that they can print copies on request and to be picked up. He will follow up with other boards and commissions and offer to send it via email or pick up at their request.

Mr. Rauch stated at each council meeting department heads alternate and give reports. He wants to be sensitive to council's time and what they discussed earlier with overlap of weekly updates. He asked what type of information they would like to hear during the reports. He feels they should be short, sweet, and to the point; things most important for the community to hear about. Mrs. Franklin stated when something is reported as item 'X' and when the meeting happens something else has happened regarding 'X' that is when she would like to get the update. She doesn't need the same information that has been shared, only a change to something they have not heard, yet. Mayor Williams stated they don't need to report just to report as their time is valuable. Unless it is pressing or something that they will be considering for legislation or allocation of funds, they do not need to attend every meeting as they already have an important job to do. If there is something pertinent, they would love to hear from them, but otherwise they have an important job to do. Ms. Fry stated if there are things they would like to ask of or from the community she would like to hear from department heads. Ms. Lommatzsch stated it is an opportunity for people who can't come to meetings to hear from them; she feels the community is interested in hearing directly from them. She added when police and fire give their statistics, along with all the information they are putting online, there are still a lot of people who don't live on their computer. If there are things that need supported like money issues, then they need to feed that information all the time. Department heads and their information need to be visible to the community. Mr. Rauch stated he is not trying to have department heads not attend. He plans to keep having them report if they have a report or an agenda item; they need to be at the meeting. Only if there is nothing on the agenda, and there isn't a report, then they do not need to be at the meeting. Mayor Williams added he did not want to hear department head just recite portions of the PAR. He feels there are better uses of their time to report on what has been reported. He feels the pathway Josh is laying out is one that will work for them and the community. Mr. Rauch stated that is the balance he is trying to strike and be more efficient.

Mr. Rauch stated in February they will see a new council orientation PowerPoint he is working on that will include some of the council handbook as well as a sort of Riverside one-on-one. An element of this will be to organize a tour or series of tours, particularly of the city facilities, but also the community, in general. Discussion was held on the type of tour they should have. It was determined to do a Saturday, closer to the spring.

## III) Code-related Updates

Mr. Rauch stated he has spoken to the attorneys about the council handbook and that the charter requires adopting of Council rules by ordinance. The handbook largely duplicates what is in the Administrative Code, Chapter 111 – Council. In order to minimize redundancy, they can adopt the handbook as council rules and eliminate the code in Chapter 111, allowing the handbook to become the governing rules for city council. Then they can annually update the handbook by motion. He is not aware of the information shared prior to him coming on, but Mr. Miller, the attorney, stated this is how communities across the country do it. If



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

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council is fine with this, Mr. Rauch stated he would bring forth legislation in the near future to put this into effect. Council agreed for this to come forward.

Mr. Rauch stated the city has received increased interest from developers for unique/higher density projects. The kinds of projects that developers are talking about don't always fit neatly into their current zoning ordinance. The idea of a PUD is a way of giving the developer some latitude; it is its own zoning code. The idea is to zone a property or parcel as a PUD and outline some very broad strokes as to what is permitted on that parcel or in that use with staff having some discretion on if it meets or doesn't meet what is written. It provides flexibility to bring unique projects to the area. Nia and Gary have already completed a first draft PUD code revision. He presented the timeline for the PUD process to come to them as an ordinance. The PUD would be effective in May or June that could empower developers to come in and look at projects that they can't look at right now based on how they are set up. Mr. Joseph asked if they could move faster on this by suspending the rules so they can get a jump on construction. Mr. Rauch stated he would double check with the attorney. They did not undertake the effort for a specific project; they have just been presented with some ideas from developers. Discussion was held on how soon the legislation could come forward.

## IV) Priority Policy Areas

Mr. Rauch stated that this year's budget has some significant transfers from the general fund to the public service fund. Unlike police and fire, public service has few dedicated revenue streams. In this year's budget, the department will get about \$480,000 in gas tax, and that is reflective of the work the department does for streets. They can use it for personnel to the extent of road related maintenance. Another function of public service is storm water management. The city received a notice of violation from the Ohio EPA in September 2021 with respect to storm water management on city owned parcels. Staff has been working with the EPA and MC Soil & Water and have rectified the violations as far as they are aware. They need to maintain storm water on city owned parcels to stay in compliance as that will not go away. This is work that public service can do or assist with maintenance. They need to do more storm water related inspections. This involves any development over an acre that disturbs soil. They also have requirements to inspect storm water facilities after they have been constructed. They struggle to do that now with current staffing. They are discussing with MC to secure some backup to meet those obligations. They either pay staff or someone else to help them. There are not a lot of options to increase funding for public service and stormwater activities. They could look at a storm water utility fee, many communities nearby and across the United States have one. It is a surcharge dedicated to paying for storm water maintenance. This fee must be dedicated to storm water operations and maintenance. If they have a fee, they can reduce transfers from the general fund, and this would partially offset the costs. It is a big undertaking. He asked council if they would like him to further investigate and get more clear numbers to potentially bring back to council to adopt later this year. He has worked with ChoiceOne to start looking at updated numbers for what revenue could potentially look like. He wants to know if council wants to think about doing it this year. Ms. Lommatzsch asked if this was a council action and not a citizen vote. Mr. Rauch stated that is his understanding. Deputy Mayor Denning stated the history before regarding a storm water utility; he added they should have done this three years ago. Mrs. Franklin

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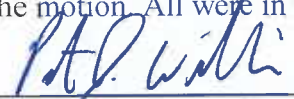
stated it is something the city needs; other cities around them already have this in place. Mayor Williams stated he has the green light to move forward as council is ready to consider establishing a storm water district. Mr. Rauch stated they have a running start on some numbers. He would come up with a prioritized list of all the storm water projects throughout the city and would start paying for that using this fee. He will bring a timeline calendar to council next month and have a briefing done by ChoiceOne or another engineering firm. Deputy Mayor Denning asked if it would be put on property taxes. Mr. Rauch stated that is typically how it is done in a city the size of Riverside. Discussion was held on collection and fees. Mr. Lommatzsch asked if they recalled how they were going to bill it when they discussed it years ago. Mr. Garrett stated they were going to assess it to the property. The county will charge about a 5% administrative fee. Mayor Williams added that the need for storm water management is not going to go away, and the city is only going to grow. The ability to properly manage and fund the public service department that dedicates a lot of time to storm water is a reality they have to deal with using general fund transfers, which is not ideal. Mr. Joseph agreed that this is a solution to that. Mr. Rauch stated this would help to systemically address the storm water issues of the community.

**COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS:** Mr. Joseph stated he shares a birthday with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and read a famous quote of his, "Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right." He stated that is really pertinent to what they do on council. Mayor Williams wished everyone a safe 3-day weekend, honoring the memory of Dr. King. Ms. Lommatzsch wished Mr. Joseph a happy birthday. She stated she hears from parents frustrated on what is going on in schools and that teachers and bus drivers get sick as well. Kids are safe in the schools. She asked the community to work on their own safety and consider the vaccine. Ms. Fry thanked the city manager for the work session items on the agenda; when they work on how they do their work they create a better product in the end. Deputy Mayor Denning stated he was glad to see progress at the old Morris Furniture. This is a positive thing for the community. He thanked staff for everything they do for them every day. He agreed with Ms. Fry on the work session being productive. They have a good team to make progress.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Deputy Mayor Denning motioned to go into executive session for the purpose of property issues. Ms. Lommatzsch seconded the motion. Roll call went as follows: Mr. Denning, yes; Ms. Lommatzsch, yes; Mrs. Franklin, yes; Ms. Fry, yes; Mr. Joseph, yes; and Mayor Williams, yes. Council went into executive session at 7:20 pm.

**RECONVENE:** Council reconvened at 7:45 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Deputy Mayor Denning motioned to adjourn. Mrs. Franklin seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion carried.** The meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

  
Peter J. Williams, Mayor

  
Clerk of Council